

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

Spring 2020

2020

Spring 1-15-2020

ENG 5020-001: Graduate Workshop in Creative Writing

Woody Skinner

Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2020

Recommended Citation

Skinner, Woody, "ENG 5020-001: Graduate Workshop in Creative Writing" (2020). *Spring 2020*. 85.
https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2020/85

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2020 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spring 2020 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

ENG5020-001: Graduate Workshop in Creative Writing

Monday 7:00-9:30pm * Coleman 3159

Instructor

Dr. Woody Skinner

wwskinner@eiu.edu

Office: Coleman 3040

Office Hours: M 10:00-11:00 and 6:00-7:00, W 10:00-11:00, F 10:00-11:00, and by appointment

Required Texts

- Christopher Castellani, *The Art of Perspective: Who Tells the Story*
- Kelcey Parker Ervick, *Liliane's Balcony: A Novella of Fallingwater*
- William Maxwell, *So Long, See You Tomorrow*
- Jon McGregor, *Reservoir 13*
- Toni Morrison, *Jazz*
- Nelly Reifler, *Elect H. Mouse State Judge*
- Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*
- Nick White, *How to Survive a Summer*

Course Description

This fiction workshop will foreground the concept of point of view and consider its critical relationship to other principles of craft. You'll read classic and contemporary texts, critique your classmates' pieces, and contribute original fiction to the workshop. Along the way, our discussions will be bolstered by a range of supplementary readings on craft and creativity.

Assignments & Grading

Workshop Submissions	200 points (100 points X 2)
Workshop Critiques and POV Statements	200 points
Workshop Leadership	100 points
English Studies Conference Participation	100 points
General Participation (discussion, exercises, quizzes, etc.)	200 points
Final Portfolio	200 points
Total	1000 points

Workshop Submissions:

Your individual workshop submissions should include one of the following: 1) a single full-length short story (roughly 6-30 pages), 2) a packet of flash fictions (6-15 pages), or 3) a standalone excerpt of a novel or novella (up to 30 pages).

Workshop Critiques:

In response to your classmates' workshop manuscripts, you will provide line-level/marginal notes and a comprehensive endnote that individually describes and

analyzes the following aspects of craft: plot, character, setting/imagery, point of view, scene vs. summary, diction/style. The note should conclude with an overview that draws connections between these individual craft elements (“Right now the point of view limits our understanding of the character’s motivations.”).

Your feedback should be emailed to the writer and me (wwskinner@eiu.edu) before each workshop.

Point of View Statements:

Before your own workshop, you’ll submit a point of view statement that describes the style of your narration (the person, tense/timing, psychic distance, etc.) and explains how it serves the other aspects of your craft (plot, character, setting/imagery, point of view, scene vs. summary, diction/style). The statement should also position your narration in relation to the styles employed in our readings and in other published works.

Workshop Leadership:

Each student will be responsible for leading one workshop this semester. You’ll introduce your classmate’s story (or stories) by discussing its aesthetic context (including possible influences), its creative goals, its storyline, and its point of view. Afterwards, you’ll describe the story’s greatest strengths and then conclude your presentation by identifying 2-3 aspects of the piece that you have questions about or that might benefit from further discussion.

English Studies Conference Participation:

All students will be required to participate in the English Studies Conference on April 7; the deadline for conference proposals is Friday, March 20th. More information about the conference can be found at the following web address:

<https://www.eiu.edu/english/conference.php>. If, for one reason or another, you are unable to present, please reach out in advance of the proposal deadline—we’ll make alternative arrangements.

Final Portfolio

At the end of the semester, you will turn in a portfolio that includes revised versions of your workshop submissions. Revisions should be based on workshop feedback, and they should be structural rather than superficial. In other words, successful revisions will include new scenes, characters, perspectives, plot points, etc.

Course Policies

Attendance

It will be very difficult to succeed in this class if you do not attend each week. After two unexcused absences, I will deduct a letter grade for each missed class.

Classroom Environment

Constructive university classrooms require professors and students to respect differences—of background, thought, opinion, and belief. This notion holds special significance in our creative classroom, where you will be asked to routinely engage with

your classmates' perspectives and experiences. Therefore, respect will serve as the guiding principle and bedrock expectation of our work together this semester.

Policy on Plagiarism

Here is the English department's plagiarism policy: "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources."

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct

(<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

D2L

You will use D2L to view the syllabus, access supplemental readings, and turn in major assignments, so it will be important for you to familiarize yourself with the D2L platform. If, at any time, you have questions about our online resources or encounter a course-specific problem with D2L, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Schedule

The following schedule is tentative; I reserve the right to make adjustments for the benefit of the class.

M, January 13th Intro to Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Openings: <i>The Art of Perspective</i> and <i>How to Survive a Summer</i>
M, January 20th	Class Canceled: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
M, January 27th Retrospective First-Person Narration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Art of Perspective</i>• <i>How to Survive a Summer</i>

M, February 3rd Retrospective First-Person Narration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Art of Perspective</i> • <i>So Long, See You Tomorrow</i> • Workshop 1
M, February 10th Immediate First-Person (Recent Past and Present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Art of Perspective</i> • Short Story Packet (available on D2L) • Workshop 2
M, February 17th Third-Person Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Art of Perspective</i> • Short Story Packet (available on D2L) • Workshop 3
M, February 24th Third-Person Omniscient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Art of Perspective</i> • <i>Reservoir 13</i> • Workshop 4
M, March 2nd Third-Person Omniscient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reservoir 13</i> • Workshop 5
M, March 9th Third-Person Omniscient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>White Teeth</i> • Workshop 6
M, March 16th	Class Canceled: Spring Break
M, March 23rd Third-Person Omniscient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>White Teeth</i> • Workshop 7
M, March 30th Rotating Third	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop 8 • Liliane's Balcony
M, April 6th Rotating Third	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop 9 • Liliane's Balcony
M, April 13th Unorthodox Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop 10 • <i>Elect H. Mouse State Judge</i>
M, April 20th Evasive Omniscience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jazz</i> • Workshop 11
M, April 27th Evasive Omniscience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jazz</i> • Workshop 12

**Finals Week, May
4th-8th**

- **Portfolio due at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 8th**